

Personnel

# pRide

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DECEMBER 1992



## EMPLOYEE BENEFIT ISSUES

by Brian E. Keeler  
Chief of Employee Benefits

*Editors' Note: This new column on Employee Benefit Issues will be a regular feature of your newsletter. Look for it in all future editions of pRide and keep posted on new changes in YOUR benefits.*

## SMOKING CESSATION PROGRAMS

There appears to be a recent renewed interest in smoking cessation programs, perhaps resulting from an increase in "smoke-free workplace" policies by various agencies. Additionally, there has been much publicity lately regarding the stop smoking "patch" drug.

Therefore, I would urge employees who are interested in knowing more about smoking cessation programs to contact their health plan carrier. The special State employee customer service telephone numbers were printed in the recently distributed Open Enrollment brochures (see your Personnel/Payroll Office for a copy) and are repeated here.

### TELEPHONE NUMBERS

#### Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island

Classic Blue & HealthMate Customer Service

831-6550 or 1-800-327-6152

Managed Benefits Hotline

272-5670 or 1-800-635-2477

#### Ocean State Physicians Health Plan

737-6900 or 1-800-422-1404

#### Harvard Community Health Plan of New England

331-4034, Ext. 3300

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## THE GOVERNOR'S HOLIDAY MESSAGE



Bruce Sundlun  
Governor

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER, PROVIDENCE

Dear Fellow State Employee:

I would like to extend to you and your family my best personal wishes for a joyous Holiday Season and a happy New Year.

The last two years have been tough on all of us. But as 1992 draws to a close, it is important that we focus on the progress we have made in setting things right for Rhode Island.

Two years ago, the state was in fiscal chaos. We had the largest budget deficit in the nation and we were deep in a recession. We balanced the budget with \$400 million in cuts and deferrals. We had to shut the state down to save money, and we had to ask all state employees to sacrifice through deferring a portion of their pay.

Together, we weathered the storm. Today we are solvent, state spending is under control, and we have a small surplus in which to build for our future.

As Governor, I would like to thank you for your personal sacrifices and for your continued dedication to state government. Happy Holidays.

Best personal wishes.

Sincerely,

## HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT WORKERS' COMPENSATION?

**DID YOU KNOW THAT** — The Education Unit of the Division of Workers' Compensation, Department of Labor,

(continued on page 2)

# Season's Greetings





## FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

### Executive Orders

No. Date Subject

- 92-21 9-16-92 Designates the R.I. Occupational Information Coordinating Committee to be responsible for oversight and management of R.I.'s Statewide comprehensive labor market and occupational supply and demand information system for R.I.
- 92-22 9-22-92 Creates a Select Commission to Study the Future of Solid Waste Management in R.I.
- 92-22A 9-20-92 Amends the composition of the Select Commission to Study the Future of Solid Waste Management in R.I.
- 92-23 10-14-92 Repeals EO 90-11 concerning the reorganization of the Department of Business Regulations.
- 92-24 10-20-92 Establishes the Governor's Health Care Advisory Committee to assist with program development, financing and preparation of legislation on health care.

For more information or copies of Executive Orders, call the Office of the Executive Counsel, 277-2080, Ext. 258.

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION

(continued from page 1)

was authorized and created under section 42-94-5.1 of the Rhode Island General Laws?

Directed by Ms. E. Jean Severance, Administrator, the Unit is responsible for assisting all workers, **including state employees**, who have been injured on the job.

The staff answer inquiries and provide technical information concerning the rights of injured workers and advises on the correct method of filing for and receiving workers' compensation benefits. For assistance, call 272-0700, 277-3994, or the toll free number 1-800-675-9233 (WCED).

The Education Unit also provides educational services to both workers and employers on the prevention of occupational diseases and injuries, training in workers' compensation procedures and substantive rights, and provides information concerning known and suspected workplace hazards.

### pRide

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## OFFICE OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

### OTD RECOGNIZES THE DEDICATION OF IN-HOUSE TRAINERS WHO PROVIDE QUALITY TRAINING PROGRAMS TO ALL EMPLOYEES, STATEWIDE

Sgt. Armand Pires	Prov. County Sheriff's Office
Harold "Cap" Smith	University of RI
Juan Francisco	University of RI
Paul Holbrook	Human Rights Commission
George Whalen	Admin/State Building Commission
John Turano	Admin/Labor Relations
Victor Mendoza	Admin/Personnel
Gerri Iadevaia	Admin/EEO
Nancy Kolman	Admin/Workers' Compensation
	Fraud Unit
Al Provencher	Citizen!
Karen Grant	MHRH/Training & Education
Denise Joyal	DHS/Long Term Care
Christine Marshall	DHS/Refugee Resettlement
Mark Bousquet	DHS/Long Term Care
Pat Ryherd	DHS/Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired
Mary Diebler	Governor's Advisory Commission on Women

WATCH FOR OUR CATALOG OF JANUARY  
THRU JUNE 1993 COURSE OFFERINGS...  
COMING SOON!!

HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY

## Oops, we goofed!

In the last issue of pRide we ran a chart showing the advantages of a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan versus a conventional savings plan. The column headings were inadvertently switched. The correct chart appears below.

	457 DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLAN ACCOUNT	CONVENTIONAL SAVINGS
Annual salary	\$25,000	\$25,000
457 Deferred Compensation Plan contribution	2,500	0
Adjusted "taxable" income	22,500	25,000
Federal taxes	2,580	2,988
FICA	1,912	1,912
Take-home pay	18,008	20,100
Conventional savings plan contribution	0	2,500
<b>SPENDABLE INCOME</b>	<b>18,008</b>	<b>17,600</b>

The example is based on 1990 federal income taxes for an individual with a gross salary of \$25,000, single filing status claiming the standard deductions. This comparison is for illustrative purposes only.

For more information about VALIC's Deferred Compensation Plans, call 1-800-44-VALIC (1-800-448-2542).



## ELDERLY AFFAIRS SAFETY INITIATIVE PROMOTES LIFESTYLE CHANGES FOR ELDERS

By Lawrence V. Grimaldi  
Information & Public Relations Specialist  
Department of Elderly Affairs

A 70 year-old woman slips getting out of the tub and breaks her hip. A lengthy hospital stay is followed by three months of nursing home rehabilitation.

A 75 year-old begins a new medication for his heart problem. Within days, he feels dizzy, irritable and has no appetite. Is his new medication interacting with others he is taking for hypertension and diabetes?

An older couple is rear-ended in a car accident. Neither is wearing a safety belt. He sustains a severe neck injury. She suffers a concussion and facial cuts when she is hurled forward into the windshield.

These accounts are not fiction. Unfortunately, falls and accidents are a common occurrence for too many elders. To help combat the likelihood of injury and death from falls and accidents, The Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs (DEA) has initiated the Strategies on Safety (SOS) campaign.

The DEA recognized that accidents and falls not only cause injuries and death but also account for disability as well as loss of mobility and independence for elders. The National Center for Disease Control reports that 25% of adults age 65 to 74 fall each year. That number jumps to 33% for persons age 75 and older. More than 100,000 deaths each year in elders are related to falls and fall-related injuries. In Rhode Island, falls are the leading cause of death from injury in persons age 65 and older. An average of 60 Rhode Island elders die annually from falls.

Using a three-pronged approach, the SOS campaign combats injuries and falls for the nearly 200,000 Rhode Islanders over 60. The centerpiece of the SOS program is a series of three one-day workshops designed to help elders identify physical and environmental conditions which contribute to falls, provide information on osteoporosis and encourage physical fitness to help prevent falls and injuries. The SOS program also features mini-presentations. These mini-presentations are capsule versions of the full SOS program featuring home safety, nutrition, medication use and misuse and physical fitness. A driver education/pedestrian safety program is another component of the SOS initiative.

The first session of the formal, three-day SOS workshop features presenters from the Brown University Gerontology Center. Methods of making a home safer and abating the risks of accidents and falls are discussed. Some hints include: Wearing proper shoes; installing railings on both sides of the staircase; keeping stairs free of obstacles; installing good inside and outside lighting; taping down or eliminating use of scatter rugs; not placing electrical or telephone cords across the floor; installing grab bars on shower or bathroom walls; placing non-skid strips on the shower or tub floor; using non-skid wax on kitchen floors; not standing on chairs to reach overhead items.

The first SOS workshop also focuses on use and misuse of medications. Pharmacists from the University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy conduct this session.

Pharmacists urge elders to: advise doctors and

pharmacists of all prescription and over-the-counter medications taken; be aware of side effects of each medication; ask their doctors if their medications cause drowsiness or dizziness; avoid or severely restrict use of alcohol when taking medications; develop a relationship with doctors and pharmacists and ask questions about medications; never take someone else's medication.

The second SOS workshop is sometimes called "bones day." Leading Rhode Island geriatricians focus on the diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis (loss of bone mass). Osteoporosis causes bone thinning and is a major cause of falls. This presentation includes discussions of estrogen replacement therapy for older women and the importance of calcium and proper nutrition in preventing osteoporosis.

The final SOS workshop introduces physical fitness and exercises as a way of improving balance, strength and flexibility. The DEA recreation and physical fitness coordinator demonstrates a series of simple exercises which can be performed seven to ten minutes each day to help reduce falls, injuries and accidents. Small weights are used in weight-bearing exercises as a method of increasing muscle strength and bone mass.

"The SOS initiative is designed to show elders that with a few small adjustments they can be less prone to falls and accidents," Maureen Maigret, DEA Director, declared. "The SOS program helps elders preserve their mobility, independence and quality of life," she concluded.

For information on the SOS program, call Susan Sweet, DEA Associate Director at (401) 277-2861 or write to: RI Department of Elderly Affairs Strategies on Safety Program, 160 Pine Street, Providence, RI 02903-3708.

## EMPLOYEE BENEFIT ISSUES

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### HMO Rhode Island

274-6674 or 1-800-528-4141

### Pilgrim Health Care

617-871-3950 or 1-800-742-8326

Also, if you need assistance in trying to sort out how to investigate and begin treatment, you may wish to contact the Rhode Island Employee Assistance Program (RIEAP). Our Employee Assistance Program, a free service available as a benefit to all employees and their family members, is a confidential, professional resource for persons needing information, assessment and referral to counseling or other resources within the community. Call Toll-Free 1-800-445-1195.

## OPTIONAL LIFE PLAN RATE INCREASE

Due to unfavorable claims experience during the past two years, our Office had no choice but to grant a rate increase recently to US Life. Under this plan, employees may apply for one, two or three times salary with premiums bracketed by age group (as you move into a new age group, your premium goes up).

Although the rate increase may have been justified, we feel that a more competitive rate should now be sought in the open market. Therefore, we have scheduled the Optional Life Program for competitive bid this year and hope to achieve desired results (lower rates), either through the current carrier or another bidder, to be in place by July 1, 1993.

If you would like a new booklet or want specific rate information for the changes effective October 4, 1992, please see your Personnel/Payroll Office or call the State Employee Benefits Office at 277-3160.

This calendar is brought to you by  
**The Office of Personnel Administration**  
**1993**

**JANUARY**

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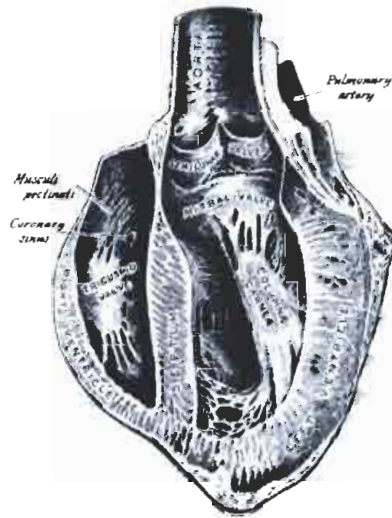
**DECEMBER**

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**1993 STATE HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

- New Year's Day - Friday, January 1
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday - Monday, January 18
- Memorial Day - Monday, May 31
- Independence Day - Sunday, July 4 (We celebrate on Monday)
- Victory Day - Monday, August 9
- Labor Day - Monday, September 6
- Columbus Day - Monday, October 11
- Veteran's Day - Thursday, November 11
- Thanksgiving Day - Thursday, November 25
- Christmas Day - Saturday, December 25

**CIRCLED DAYS INDICATE PAY DAY FOR STATE EMPLOYEES**

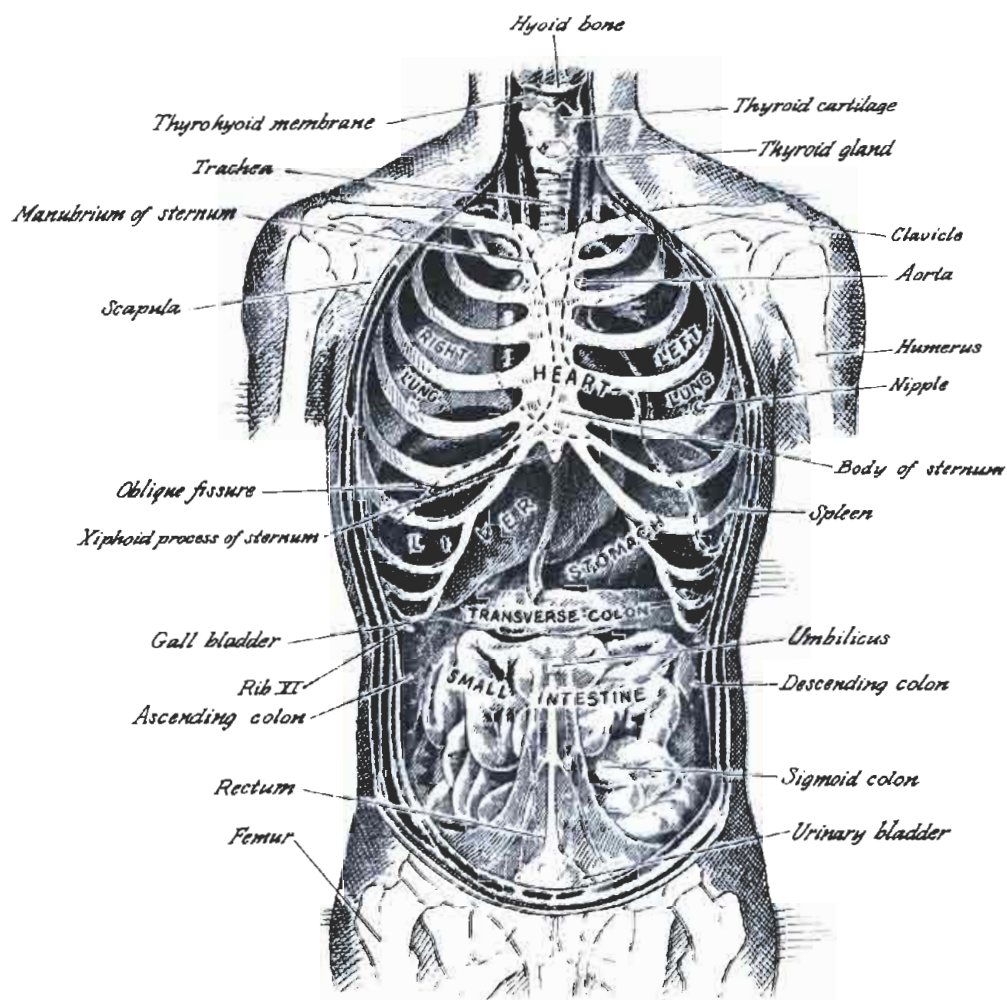


Here's Wishing You  
A Happy Holiday  
From The Bottom Of  
Our Fibro-Serous  
Pericardia.



Harvard Community  
Health Plan *of New England*





A System As Complex  
As Yours Deserves Care As  
Complete As Ours.



Harvard Community  
Health Plan of New England